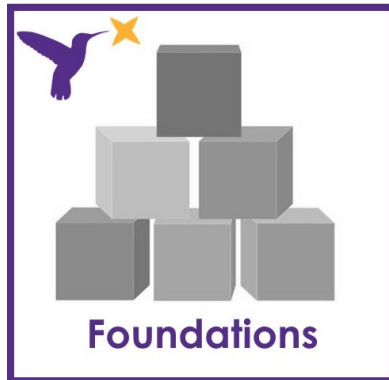


# RSHE

## Information for parents



Supporting our pupils to grow up safe,  
healthy, happy and respectful.

# Welcome and Purpose

As a specialist school, we believe that Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) is an important part of helping our pupils develop essential life skills. It supports them in staying safe, understanding their feelings and bodies, and building healthy, respectful relationships.

We recognise that our pupils may be more vulnerable because of their additional needs. That's why it is especially important that they receive clear, structured and age-appropriate RSHE that reflects who they are and the world around them.

A high-quality RSHE curriculum gives children and young people the knowledge and understanding they need to form safe and respectful relationships, manage changes as they grow, and make informed choices. When taught at the right time and in the right way, RSHE helps to safeguard, protect and empower our pupils.

At West Oaks, we are committed to working closely with parents and carers to provide this support. We value partnership with families and carers and aim to work together from the moment your child joins us through to their next steps beyond school.

## What is Relationships, Sex and Health Education

Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) helps children and young people understand relationships, their bodies, their emotions, and how to stay safe and healthy as they grow up.

RSHE is taught in a way that is appropriate to each child's age and stage of development. The information shared is factual and presented sensitively, always with our pupils' wellbeing at the centre. The aim is to help children and young people build the knowledge and skills they need to make safe, respectful choices and to understand what healthy relationships look like.

We have created an RSHE leaflet for each pathway, which explains in more detail what is covered at each stage. We carefully tailor the content so that it is suitable for every pupil at West Oaks.

Before any new topics are taught, your child's class teacher will send a letter home explaining what will be covered, so you are fully informed and able to support your child if you wish.

## Why RSHE Matters

RSHE is important for your children because...

RSHE helps them learn accurate facts about their bodies and relationships in a safe environment where they can ask questions. In today's digital world, young people may come across harmful or misleading information online, so it is important that they receive clear and reliable information at school.

It helps protect children and young people. It teaches them how to recognise healthy and unhealthy relationships and gives them the confidence to say no and set boundaries. This helps them stay safe.

It makes it easier for them to talk about abuse and gives them a safe, supportive place to learn about difficult or sensitive subjects. It provides a safe space for them to learn about sensitive topics. It helps them to understand consent and how to tell a trusted adult if something makes them feel uncomfortable.

It helps them to understand changes that are happening to their bodies, build positive relationships, independence and confidence.

It helps develop empathy, understanding, and respect for diversity, which supports a more inclusive society. When young people learn about different identities, they are less likely to discriminate and more likely to support the mental and physical well-being of themselves and others.

High-quality RSHE does not encourage young people to have sex earlier. Instead, it promotes safer choices and better sexual health. Young people who do not receive RSHE are more likely to take risks, such as having sex too early or without protection. Good RSHE can help young people delay sex until they feel ready and make sure it is consensual.

## Parents' Rights and Involvement

In England, parents/carers have the legal right to request that their child is withdrawn from certain sex education lessons within the Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) curriculum.

It is important to note that parents/carers cannot withdraw their child from Relationships Education (at primary or secondary level), Health Education, or from the parts of sex education that are included within the National Curriculum for Science.

### **Key information:**

**Primary school aged children:** Headteachers will usually agree to requests to withdraw a child from non-statutory sex education (excluding science content). Before making a decision, a member of the Senior Leadership Team will meet with parents to discuss any concerns and to explain the benefits of the learning.

**Secondary school aged children:** Schools will carefully consider requests to withdraw a pupil from non-statutory sex education. In exceptional circumstances - for example, where there are safeguarding concerns or particular vulnerabilities - a request may be declined. As with primary, this will always involve a discussion with parents or carers about the reasons for the curriculum content.

**Pupil rights:** From three terms before their 16th birthday, young people have the right to choose to receive sex education themselves, even if their parents/carers have previously requested withdrawal. If you have any concerns about RSHE content, we strongly encourage you to contact the school to discuss them. If you decide to request withdrawal from non-statutory sex education, this should be made formally in writing.

Each term, we will send a letter outlining the topics your child will be covering. This will clearly identify which content is statutory (compulsory) and which is non-statutory. We are always happy to talk through any questions or concerns you may have.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **How do you make sure the content is age-appropriate?**

We carefully follow the latest Government guidance from the Department for Education, including the statutory document "Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education." We also use guidance from the PSHE Association to ensure our curriculum reflects best practice.

Our RSHE curriculum is thoughtfully adapted to meet the individual needs of each pupil. This is overseen by our Senior Leadership Team, Curriculum Pathway Leads and Classroom Teachers, who work together to make sure content is suitable for each child's age, stage of development and level of understanding.

Where appropriate, we create our own high-quality resources to ensure learning is accessible and relevant for our pupils. We also use materials from trusted organisations such as Brook, the NSPCC and the Sex Education Forum.

All content is carefully selected and delivered sensitively, with our pupils' wellbeing, safety and dignity at the centre of everything we do.

### **What training do staff have to teach RSHE?**

All lead members of staff have received internal training on the latest Government guidance, our school policy, and best practice in delivering high-quality RSHE.

In addition, staff have completed external training to further strengthen their expertise. This includes "What is RSHE and Good Practice" delivered by Split Banana, and "Teaching RSHE in a Specialist Setting" delivered by the Sex Education Forum.

Staff work closely with the Senior Leadership Team when planning and delivering RSHE to ensure sessions are appropriate, well-prepared and supportive of pupils' individual needs.

After each session, we will contact you to let you know what has been covered in your child's RSHE lesson, so you feel informed and able to continue conversations at home if you wish.

# Frequently Asked Questions

## **How do you handle questions from pupils during lessons?**

During RSHE lessons, most classes - including those in Footsteps Plus, Stepping Stones, Reaching High, and where appropriate, Foundations and Moving On pathways - have an "RSHE Questions Box" in the classroom.

This gives pupils the opportunity to ask questions in a safe and comfortable way by placing them in the box. It also allows teaching staff time to carefully consider each question and plan an accurate, age-appropriate response.

Where needed, staff may speak with members of the Senior Leadership Team before responding, and in some cases may consult with parents/carers to ensure questions are handled sensitively and appropriately.

Our aim is always to provide clear, factual information while supporting pupils' wellbeing and keeping open communication with families.

## **How do you make sure pupils feel safe during lessons?**

Creating a safe and supportive environment is a priority in all RSHE lessons.

Where appropriate, lessons begin by revisiting our "RSHE rules." These help pupils understand expectations around respect, privacy and boundaries. Pupils are reminded that they do not have to contribute to discussions if they do not feel comfortable.

We place a sign on the classroom door during RSHE lessons to ensure there are no interruptions. Pupils remain with familiar peers and trusted adults to help them feel secure and supported.

Staff are trained to model respectful communication and to gently address anything that does not reflect our school values, in line with our Positive Behaviour Management Policy. They work hard to create a calm, open atmosphere where pupils feel safe to ask questions or share their thoughts if they wish.

All staff have completed safeguarding training and follow the school's safeguarding procedures if they ever have concerns about a pupil's safety or wellbeing.

# Frequently Asked Questions

## **How does RSHE respect different family values and beliefs?**

Our RSHE curriculum promotes inclusion, respect and understanding. We recognise that families may have different values, beliefs and backgrounds, and we approach all topics in a sensitive and balanced way.

Pupils learn about a range of family structures and beliefs so they can develop respect for others and understand the diverse society in which they live. We actively promote kindness and challenge discriminatory language or behaviour.

Throughout RSHE, we also ensure that pupils know they can speak to a trusted adult if they ever feel uncomfortable, worried or unsafe. Our aim is to empower pupils with knowledge while respecting the important role families play in shaping their values and beliefs.

## **Will RSHE include teaching about different families and relationships?**

Yes. Our RSHE curriculum includes learning about a range of family structures and relationship types.

This helps pupils develop respect, empathy and understanding. We teach that families are defined by love, care and commitment, rather than by one particular structure.

As our school community includes pupils from a wide range of family backgrounds, this approach promotes inclusion and helps children and young people develop a positive sense of identity and belonging.

## **Can I see the materials before they are taught?**

Yes, please contact your child's class teacher when you have received your RSHE letter to request the teaching materials that will be used for your child.

## **How does the school involve parents/carers in RSHE?**

At West Oaks, we have an open-door policy and are always happy to discuss any questions or provide more information about your child's RSHE learning. Please contact us if you would like to arrange a meeting.

We also have an RSHE stand at our parent/carer evenings. You are welcome to visit, view the information we share, and speak with a member of our team. In addition, we hold RSHE parent/carer coffee mornings. These sessions give an overview of our curriculum, explain relevant Government guidance, and highlight any updates. They also provide a space for parents and carers to talk with each other, ask questions, and receive further information.

Dates for these sessions will be shared via ClassDojo, so please keep an eye out.

## Further Information and Contact Details

You can read our full Relationships, Sex and Health Education Policy, as well as our whole-school RSHE curriculum coverage document on our website.

If you would like further information, please contact your child's Head of School.

Boston Spa Learning - Bryony Bolland-Wai

Headingley Learning - Kathryn Nelson

Woodhouse Learning, Lower School - Abigail Hill

Woodhouse Learning, Upper School - Laura Green